



President Shelly, Gov. Brewer sign \$7 million agreement for NTU



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and Arizona Governor Jan Brewer sign an agreement into law for a state funding agreement for Navajo institutions of higher education. Flanking them during the signing are Speaker Johnny Naize, delegate Dwight Witherspoon, Dr. Elmer Guy, Dr. Maggie George and former delegate Andy Ayze. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

PHOENIX — Education is a cornerstone for the Shelly-Jim administration.

In support of this, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly met with Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer on March 26 to sign a funding agreement between the Navajo Nation, the State of Arizona, Dine' College and Navajo Technical University.

A funding agreement between the Nation and Arizona has been in place since 1999, but recent amendments to the legislation allowed for funding to also be provided for Navajo Technical University.

While signing the agreement into law next to President Shelly, Gov. Brewer said, "It is an honor today to be able to participate

with you."

He responded, "Well, it's an honor to be with you today. I was supposed to be with Gov. Martinez, but I chose to be here with you today."

Flanked by Speaker of the 22nd Navajo Nation Council Johnny Naize, delegate Dwight Witherspoon, Dr. Maggie George, Dr. Elmer Guy and former delegate Andy Ayze, President Shelly and Gov. Brewer signed the agreement into law.

After the agreement was signed, President Shelly joined the group for photos and expressed appreciation for the funding.

"The Navajo Nation is thankful for the support we have received from Governor Brewer and the State of Arizona," President Shelly said. "This legislation gives our Navajo students a healthy learning environment and the necessary infrastructure at our tribal institutions of learning.

"Chief Manuelito instructed the Navajo people to climb the ladder of education. We are still climbing," he added.

Under terms of the agreement, Transaction Privilege Tax revenues collected on the Navajo Nation will be utilized to provide up to \$1.75 million annually for Dine' College and \$875,000 annually for Navajo Technical University. This will continue through 2020.

Gov. Brewer presented the "\$7 million pen" to President Shelly after the signing was completed. He gave the pen to Dr. Guy as commemoration of the historic event for NTU.

On Feb. 7, 2014, Resolution No. 0038-14 was sponsored by Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hard Rock, Pinon, Whippoorwill) and introduced to the 22nd Navajo Nation Council as an action relating to Health Education and Human Services and the Budget and Finance Committees.

The funding compact with the state has been in place since Oct. 19, 1999 and was originally only for Dine' College. TPT funding collected on the Nation was provided to the college to support maintenance, renewal and capital expenses.

In 2013, amendments to the agreement passed through the Arizona Legislature with House Bill 2009. The bill made provisions to the existing agreement to include NTU, with funding allocations of \$875,000 per year.

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